

FREE!

MONDAY morning

ANIME EXPOSURES

The Official ANIME EXPO 2000 Newsletter

- **Princess Mononoke** 10:00am
- **Signings** 10:00am - 3:00pm
- **Art Auctions** 1:00pm
- **Awards Ceremony** 5:00pm
- **Closing Ceremonies** 6:00pm

Issue 007

Because Animated Minds Want To Know

July 3, 2000

Escaflowne

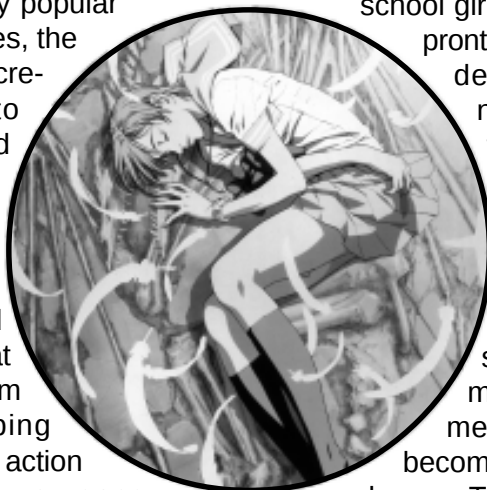
Dragons, a high school girl, sorceresses, and a dude with wings

Ask any attendee at AX 2000 and they'll tell you *Escaflowne: A Girl in Gaia* is the movie to see. Based on the enormously popular '95 television series, the film is an all-star creation designed to please old fans and amaze some newbies. Having seen it, I have to say the newbies got the better end of the deal. But that is not to say the film is not jaw-dropping gorgeous. Certain action scenes will make you gape with awe. And a haunting soundtrack scored by the incomparable Yoko Kanno is major icing on the cake. But all of these goodies could not hide a bare-bone plot, and all the returning characters other than Hitomi and Van were relegated to cameo-size roles. Which isn't too bad, because the more substantial television series is easily available from Bandai Entertainment. But you can't blame an old fan like me for expecting more.

Things start with a grand intro of the revamped Van – buffer and hairier than his TV self – taking the legendary armor weapon Escaflowne from his arch nemesis, the Black Dragon Clan. Van is the last King of the White Dragon Clan (just one of the mystical tribes in the magical world of Gaia) and wants

revenge for the death of his people. Meanwhile on good old Earth, Hitomi – a very depressed high school girl – needs prozac pronto! Contemplating death and loneliness, she wishes to vanish from the world. She gets something better than prozac: a free trip to Gaia for some self-affirmation, which means she gets to become the Wing Goddess. The way she is

teleported to Gaia is a visual delight. Hint: no light columns this time around. After Hitomi literally falls into Van's arms, the real fun begins. The rest of the cast is quickly introduced, like models in a fashion show. See Allen in his new hairdo, and what nice outfit. Try not to feel sorry for his fans, now that he has been downgraded from main lead to support character. At least he still fights well. See Millerna as a redhead, sporting a cooler personality to boot. See Dilandu be ... as crazy as ever. He still sounds like a woman, but there will be no atomic spoiler this time around. See the golden and silver cat twins (what were their names?) do ... oops, I blinked. While all the side characters are busy grabbing what precious little screen time they can,



ANNOUNCEMENTS!

- **Confidential Masquerade Judges Revealed:** *Masters Craftsmanship Judges* were, David and Kimberly Ramsay. *Novice Craftsmanship Judges* were, Camella and Rich Rosenthal.

- **Due to Fan Demand There is an Additional Escaflowne Movie** showing in the Film Room at 3:00 pm today!

- **The Meaning of Life is now available** from the info desk.

Hitomi and Van are busy getting close, and making each other feel more complete. Half way through the movie, Hitomi no longer wishes to die and Van is willing to protect her to the death, preferably in winged mode. All of this comes in handy when the two are challenged by Folken, aka mysteriously strong villain. Bearing an old grudge, Folken wants the power of Escaflowne and the Wing Goddess to destroy all of Gaia. Will he succeed? Who cares! Just show us the fights, and that's where *Escaflowne* shines.

All of the fights featured in the film ups the ante in terms of gore and shock value. Van lays down a crew of corpses 2 minutes into the movie. As an added plus, certain characters can fight with magical powers as well as swords. With the wave of their hands (and will), bye bye horsey. The armor robots themselves are upgraded into a more organic and vampiric form. In the end, Van and Folken's showdown is relatively low-key, and lacks emotional punch since the battle is so "black" and "white."

Overall, the film feels spare and hurried. But the plot is clear and con-

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Music Video Awards

The doors of Video Room 1 opened to a full house. People lined up early to get the limited seats for the music video finalists. The music video rules changed this year, with ten finalists in each of three categories, drama, action/adventure, and comedy. The staff and the contestants both voted for the finalists, with the contestants unable to vote for themselves. Time length also extended to seven minutes. This year, AX received two submissions that judges could not exactly call "music videos," and placed them into a category of themselves: parody.

The first category for the night was drama. The nominees in this category were: Anna Exter, Shaine Grossenbacher, Brad DeMoss, Noreen Frost, Aaron Gram, Kevin Caldwell, Nic Neidenbach, Anthony Bennett, and Michael Davison. Winners were chosen for their popularity with the audience. The emcee used a high tech gadget that measured the loudness of the audience's applause and scored each accordingly. The drama videos ranged from various anime and even animated game movies. The winner for drama was Brad DeMoss for his video titled "Rhythm of the Heat." DeMoss used Princess Mononoke scenes in a dramatic rendition.

The second category was action/adventure. The nominees in this category were: Maboroshi Studios, Jeremy Bogue, Nic Neiderbach, Hot Fudge Productions, Richard Reyes, Michael Davison, Kirsten Bellars, Vlad Pohnert, and Hsien Lee. The winner for this category was Maboroshi Studio's "Escaflowne Sweating Bullents." This funny video used Dilandu's "split personality" and battle scenes. They even timed the song's lyrics to the movement of Dilandu's mouth in some lines.

The third, and toughest, category was comedy, which the emcee noted would be the best to lighten up the audience, especially when people are tired. The nominees in this category were: Jeff Wong, Kevin Caldwell, Doki Doki & SD Productions, Hsien Lee, Max Exter, Noreen Frost, Lisa Tom, James Kao, Aaron Gram, and Leigh Knight. The winner in this category was Kevin Caldwell's "Caffeine Enconium." Scenes taken from Kodomo no Ocha (Childy's Toy) merged perfectly with classical music (William Tell's overture - that horse racing music). The entire audience laughed and cheered especially loud for this one.

The special category that the judges created for the two parodies then played. The nominees were Brad DeMoss and Eric Kobet. The winner for this one, by popular demand was DeMoss's "Episode 1" parody of the movie trailer for Star Wars Episode 1. DeMoss creatively used Evangelion's characters as the Queen Amidala, Anakin Skywalker, and even Yoda! The voices went perfectly with the movement of the anime people's mouths.

Honorable mentions (handed out by AX Newsletter staff) go to the videos that thoroughly impressed the newsletter staff. "Slim Shinji," by Aaron Gram, consisted of various cut scenes from Evangelion accompanying the mix of Fatboy Slim's "Rockefeller Skank" and Eminem's "Slim Shady." "River of Dreams," by Anna Exter, played on the Totoro movie. Sailor Moon and company were guests on the Jerry Springer show in "Senshi on Springer" submitted by Doki Doki & SD Productions. "Eden," submitted by Anthony Bennett, was the only music video of any video game, and the only music video with computer generated 3D images (from Final Fantasy 7). "Sleepless Sperm," submitted by Lisa Tom, was an extremely funny music video based on the song by Monty Python.

Finally, three awards were given out for overall popularity voted for by the audience and Technical Merit and Creative Merit voted for by the judges and video entrants. For overall popularity, DeMoss's "Episode 1" won. For the Technical Merit award (9.3 points out of 10) was given to Kevin Caldwell. The Creative Merit Award (9.2 points out of 10) also went to Kevin Caldwell.

- Jing Tung

Macross Re-Mastered!

AnimEigo Panel

Presenting yesterday's 1:00pm AnimEigo panel was their president Robert Woodhead and the Producer of the new digitally re-mastered version of the Macross series, Shin Kurokawa. They began by hinting at another 'cool' but secret production that is currently being approved for producing after Macross. The sincere excitement Rob gave in the announcement of this new project only intensified the curiosity of the fans in attendance. In fact the fans all groaned at Rob's words: "another cool production, but I cannot tell you what it is."

Rob Woodhead then brought up the status of their current Macross project. "We announced this time [June 2000] last year" as the scheduled release date. Collecting his thoughts, Rob further said that the Macross production team had run into to lots of problems with materials. Many of these difficulties have been resolved with the \$100,000 spent by AnimEigo to digitally re-master the 49 episodes of the original TV series. Shin added to Rob here by noting that one-tenth of that sum was the coffee that allowed him to work his 14 hour per day shifts! Rob responded to this by saying that Shin's hair used to be blonde! (Shin's hair is jet black now...). Returning to the topic of most interest, Macross, Rob stated "as good as it is now, it will get better!" And he was not joking, a video was played on the TVs in Programming 2 that put the original animation in the left half of the screen and previews of the digitally re-mastered

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in the right half. Differences seen in this comparison are remarkable! Common to space scenes are fuzzy gray fields of outer space on the left and the desired distinct black voids of space on the right. Explosion effects also improved by added depth of color that had better luminescent properties. It is surprising to see how bad the quality of an animation can sometimes be when compared against something near perfect. Particularities that have lead to the degradation of the animation's quality include the low resolution 16mm film (the 'graininess issue'), dust dots, and scratches. Fixing one speck of dust can cost as much as \$500.

The souped up Macross could be out by Christmas - a date AnimEigo is trying much harder this time around to sticking with. An impatient fan then asked "What year that would be?" Rob's reply: "Boy, you're a tough crowd!" And within all reasonable sensibility we should expect the year as 2000 but then again we never can know for certain.

And AnimEigo is continually turning to DVDs, so users of LDs and even tapes should seriously considering buying a DVD player, as Rob suggested: "Upgrade you lazy sons of ...!"

When asked about AminEigo's future plans Rob digressed into an estranged legal dissertation: "AnimEigo neither confirms nor denies its future plans. AnimEigo neither confirms nor denies its existence as a corporation. AnimEigo neither confirms nor denies the existence of Japan. AnimEigo neither confirms nor denies the existence of Anime or that it may just be a figment of your imagination."

- Robert Lobbia

Utane Utane Utane!

While the characters and story of the Utena movie may disappoint or confuse some people, its animation quality is definitely a wonderful visual treat. The new version of the campus seemed to hover and slide in all directions, which would either amaze or nauseate the viewer. The character designs differ only slightly from those in the TV series, with new duelist costumes as well as changes to some characters' hair-styles. The only character who received a major character design revamp is Anthy, who is now without eyeglasses or the tight hair bun, leaving her hair flowing free. There are some digital effects in the movie, which was blended in nicely with the normal animation, keeping the appearance of Utena's animation style smooth in its transition from TV to the big screen.

The sound of the movie definitely stays true to the TV series. Duel songs are still in use, implying that the duel songs are possibly part of the rules. Even though the pre-duel stairclimbing-transformation sequence is gone, the song that goes with it, 'Zettai Unmei Mokushiroku' is still there, reworked and matched up to a different type of duel. The opening song from the TV series, 'Rinbu ~ Revolution' by Masami Okui, was redone and appropriately used for a certain part of the movie. The new Masami Okui song for the movie, 'Toki ni Ai wa' is hauntingly beautiful, even if one just hears it without the corresponding scene in the movie, which might as well be the most beautiful scene in the movie. Most of the original seiyuu (voice actors and actresses) were kept for the movie, with the exception of Akio's seiyuu. Akio's movie seiyuu leaves the established Utena fan yearning for the original

in the TV series. Then again, they would probably be left missing (of all characters) the TV series Akio in general.

Overall, while the movie is an audiovisual treat, the storyline and characters makes the Utena movie either a hit or miss for those who did not like or have never seen the TV series. The ending of the movie is racy in more ways than one, and is just about as logical as the ending of the TV series. In any case, it is highly recommended that one should take advantage of any chance to see this movie in a theater, or theater-venue simulation. If the storyline leaves one searching for the end of the world, one can at least enjoy the wonderful audiovisual experience the movie provides for its audience.

Escaflowne Cont from Page 1

cise, and the animation is a feast for the eyes. One thing is for sure: *A Girl in Gaia* is a great introduction to the world of Escaflowne. There are rumors of its imminent American release, but don't wait until then. Catch the surprise last showing today at 3:00 PM. It'll probably be your only chance to see this beautiful film subtitled on the big screen for a very long time.

AX2000!

EXPOSED!

Best AX2000 Experience?



*"The Utena Movie!
We like seeing people
turn into cars."*

Bonnie Boxwell
St. George, VT
Esther Aldrich
Minot, ND
Nick Boxwell
Minot, ND



"Sleeping."

Daniel Short
Mechanicsburg, PA



*"Promoting the party
Saturday at the
Bonita. Attempting
to meet Fukami."*

**Daniel
Dhearnmedhakul**
Glendale, CA



*"Staying up and
watching anime until
you collapse."*

Jeremy Etherton
Cincinnati, OH



seen one of these machines in your local arcade shouldn't be surprised to see that this machine has drawn such a crowd. There are countless numbers of people sitting down around this thing. Yes, sitting down. Which means that they got tired of standing around the DDR machine, and that they intend to stay a while. Scary, isn't it?

If you've played the previous version of this hit game, they have definitely made some improvements in this edition. When you start the game, you can now choose your character. It doesn't make a difference, but it's a nice feature to have. Another improvement is that you can now choose all the songs instead of passing a few stages to get to your favorite song. Since this is the third mix, there are returning songs such as paranoia and there are new songs such as end of the century. All in all, it's a good game but it's not worth the two-dollar/game investment.

- Paulwei Wang



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From Left: Paulwei, Marie, Karen, Jason, Wing, Jing, and their fearless leader Rob

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Jing-Ting Tung	Staff Writer
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Min-Young Lee	Guest Writer

MONDAY LIVE PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE!

MONDAY	Live Program 1 (Grand Ballroom)	Live Program 2 (Coronado)	Live Program 3 (Avalon)	Gaming (Mediterranean)
10:00 AM	Manga Artists	Misc./Industry	Misc./Industry	-
11:00 AM	Directors	Fanboy Entertainment	-	-
Noon	Character Designers	Misc./Industry	Game Room Finals	-
1:00 PM	Art Auction	Misc./Industry	Game Room Finals	-
2:00 PM	Art Auction	SPJA BoD Meeting	Misc./Industry	-
3:00 PM	Charity Auction	-	-	-
4:00 PM	Awards Ceremony	-	-	-
5:00 PM	Closing Ceremonies	-	-	-
6:00 PM	Con Gripe	-	-	-